



Rights, Meaning and the Privatization of Public Space: A Case Study of Toronto's Dundas Square

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Abstract:

The following dissertation is an investigation into the creation of a new public space in Toronto. The evaluation involved examining the space in relation to changes occurring in the public realm, including increased privatization and control. It also examined the project within the context of global changes affecting urban growth, such as place marketing, adoption of entrepreneurial strategies and the increasing role of private interests in public development. The research involved a qualitative case study investigating the planning, implementation, and outcome of the square. A series of in depth interviews were performed with relevant stakeholders and urban professionals, supported by examination of planning documents, newspaper articles, journal articles and site analysis.

The research revealed that the use of a new method of management and the intention to manage the square as a profit making events venue to interfered with the public nature of the square. It concluded that the space's ability to fulfill the needs, rights, and development of meaning necessary for good public space was sacrificed by the desire to create a commercial space that satisfies the goals of local businesses and their desired consumers. Dundas Square is reminiscent of controlled, homogenized public spaces being created in newly regenerated downtowns across the globe. The implications are increased polarization in cities and the creation of spaces that are sanitized and exclusionary.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The evolution of cities due to economic, political, and social changes has necessitated a re-evaluation of public spaces to understand their development and implications for urban life. Public space can be defined as areas in the built environment that are “common ground”, shared by all for a variety of uses and where connections are made within a community, either through direct or indirect contact between strangers, neighbours, friends, or family (Carr et al. 1992, p. xi). These spaces include streets, parks, squares, marketplaces, and public buildings. Together they provide the arena in which bonds are formed through commonalities of place, on a superficial level, or deeper bonds of religious or cultural significance. A good public space will offer the right conditions for these societal bonds to develop. The social meaning implicit in public space and its ability to shape society while simultaneously being influenced by it, has ensured the attention of those concerned with urban issues.

This dissertation provides a thorough case study of a new public square in Toronto. The research focused on the implementation of a new method of public space management which intended to create a programmed square that functions as a profit making venue. The report analyzes its conception and implementation and its ability to fulfill the needs, rights, and development of meaning necessary for good public space. The investigation addressed the planning, implementation, and outcome of this new type of public square in Toronto.

The first chapter will provide a general background to the case study, including the specific issues that were addressed. It will also provide an overview of the general significance of this case to the field of urban studies, and more specifically to the field of urban planning and urban design. This is followed by an introduction to the methods of data collection, including a brief discussion of the boundary limits of the study and any potential problems that might affect the generalizability of its conclusions.

Context of the Study

Dundas Square opened on May 30th 2003 and is the first civic square to be built in Toronto since Nathan Philips square in 1959. The decision to create the square occurred at a time of changing governance structures in Canada, specifically at the municipal level. This included the decentralization of power from the provincial level to the municipal level so cities would take a first-hand role in providing urban services. However, increased power did not come with increased funding and cities became overburdened and under funded. This period was followed by the creation of the Mega-city in Toronto. Six municipalities with independent regional governments merged into one large city with a single government structure. The idea for the mega-city was introduced by the conservative provincial government in 1995 and implemented in 2000. It marked the end of a system that was widely praised for its success over the last half century. The new structure created an imbalance between urban and suburban interests and reduced the ability of the old city of Toronto to make decisions that best suited its urban needs.

With reduced power and funding, the old city of Toronto had to consider ways to implement projects on a restricted budget which led to a dependency on the private sector. On a physical level, urban development was controlled by private developers with very few restrictions. The creation of Business Improvement Areas (BIA) developed throughout the city, and as some argue, produced a new form of non-residential gentrification. The downtown continued to change due to increasing gentrification and a condominium boom that is still in progress. Like other North American cities, Toronto is also experiencing a shift in social organization as lower income tenants are pushed to the periphery and replaced by wealthy homeowners moving back to the city.

Within the professional context of urban planning, the case of Dundas Square, itself a product of a BIA, addresses the use of public/private partnerships to create changes in the public realm within a system dominated by private interests. The systematic rejuvenation of downtown areas raises the issue of exclusion. As areas are being transformed for new types of income groups others deemed undesirable to the downtown become excluded. This requires a detailed analysis of management strategies, including

issues of control and security. A primary concern for urban planning professionals in the coming years is how to make the downtown feel safe and accessible for everyone.

Problem Statement

This dissertation examined the creation of Dundas Square in Toronto. The issue under examination was whether the programme fulfilled its objective to create a new public space in Toronto. Its aim was to analyze the type of space created in relation to the regeneration context and the original goals. In order to provide a well rounded case study the programme was investigated at every stage including conception and implementation of the idea and analysis of the outcome.

Hypothesis:

It appears the motives behind the creation of Dundas Square were part of a strategy to promote business/commercial interests, including the promotion of the city as a tourist attraction, rather than a truly democratic space that provides a common ground for Torontonians. In considering the success of the square it is necessary to determine who has benefited from the space. The issue of privatization of public space is an important factor throughout this dissertation as well as consideration of the changing socio-political and economic factors.

Physical Context:

Dundas Square is located in the downtown core at the intersection of Dundas St. and Yonge St.



Figure 1: Dundas Square

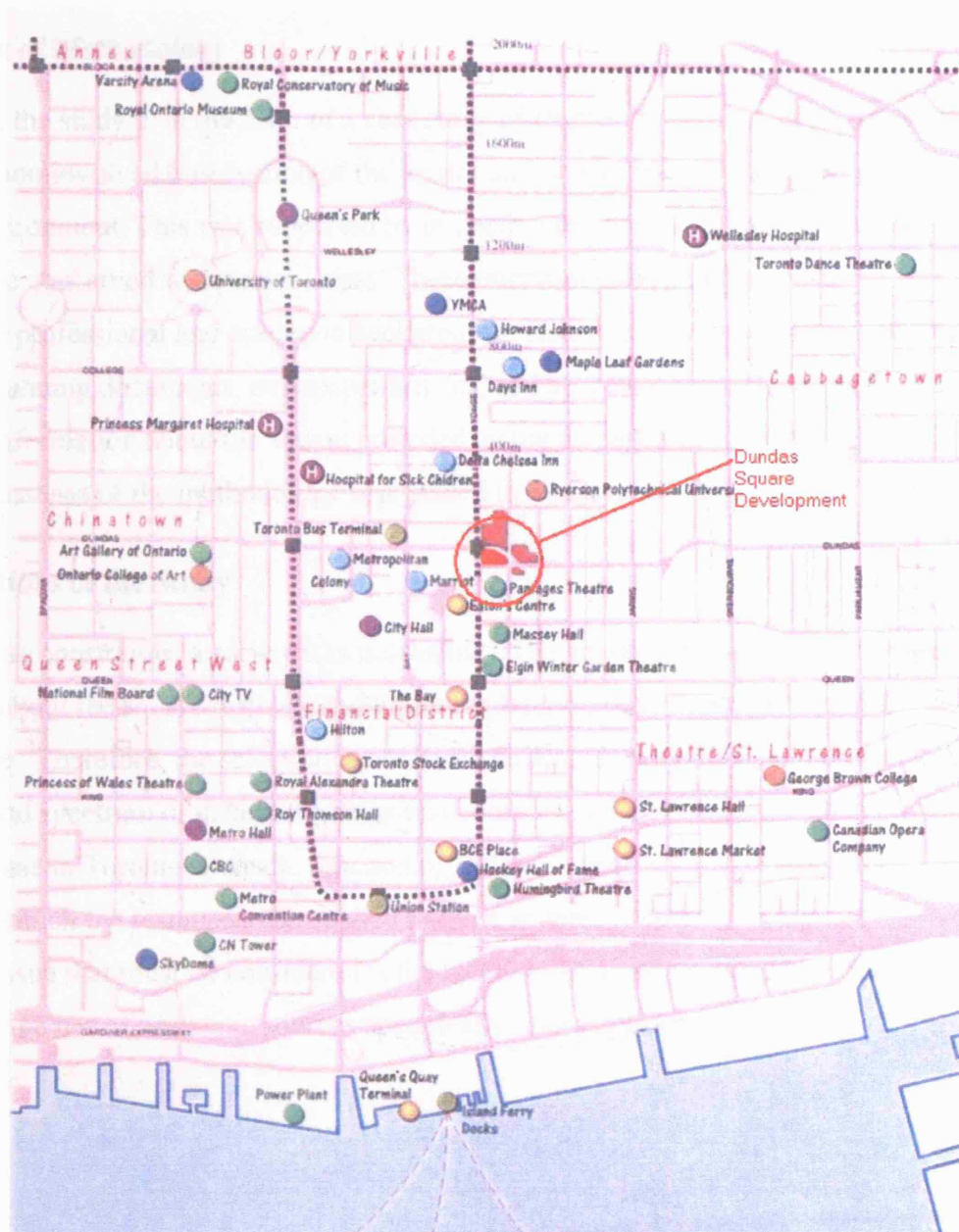


Figure 2: Map of Downtown Toronto

Professional Significance of Problem

These social, political and economic factors combined with the effects of globalization and inter-urban competition have put pressure on cities to compete for investment and resources. The spaces created under these conditions need to provide more than just functional spaces for local citizens. The professional planner needs to create a balance between the differing goals of citizens, urban leaders, and business elites.

Overview of Methodology

As stated, the study is in the form of a case study of Dundas Square. A large part of the investigation involved observation of the square and on site interviews of people in the urban environment. This was supported by in depth interviews with relevant stakeholders and people concerned with urban issues. These interviews allowed for a range of views from both professional and academic backgrounds. Relevant documents were also used such as planning documents, newspaper articles, and academic journals. As well as primary information about the square provided by the management board. A more detailed analysis of the methodology is provided in Chapter 3.

Delimitations of the Study

Due to time constraints, a survey was unfeasible. This made obtaining a broad range of opinions about the square difficult and limited to interviews with people in and around the square. Therefore, the selection is not based on a random sample and I cannot be sure that a broad spectrum of different groups was considered. The case study also provides a specific case in Toronto, Canada, functioning within a specific context. Therefore, the extent to which the results can be applied to other squares is potentially limited.

Another issue that must be considered is the fact that the square is relatively new. This restricted the use of academic sources specifically related to Dundas Square.

Conclusion

The following chapters will build upon the issues addressed in this chapter and provide a clear outline of relevant theory related to the topic in the Literature Review (Chapter 2). Chapter three provides a detailed description of the methodology used throughout the investigation (Chapter 3), followed by an analysis of findings(Chapter 4), and finally conclusions and a general discussion in Chapter 5.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter is a review of the current literature relating to public space and will present a theoretical foundation that can be addressed and built upon throughout this dissertation. The review will begin with a definition of public space and its relationship to public life, followed by a discussion of issues currently affecting public space. The transformation of public space leads to a new definition that can only be understood through a consideration of global changes that have affected how spaces are conceived and implemented. The literature review will conclude with an overview of the political and economic issues that have led to these changes.

Defining Public Space

According to Moughtin (2003), public spaces have specific functions and fulfill different needs that are necessary for the development of public life. He describes these places as essential components of a city that take on many different forms and purposes, including meeting places, civic spaces, places for ceremony, entertainment, shopping, recreation, and transportation. Moughtin states that in the hierarchy of urban spaces, the public square remains one of the most important components of urban design and its ability to shape the nature of civic life is demonstrated by squares around the world.

In a detailed analysis of how public space relates to civic life, Hannah Arendt (Goodsell, 2003) describes public space as the place for “public action”, defined as places where people can come together to exercise democratic rights. Her concern with the physical design of public space is directly related to how it might infringe on these rights and prevent freedom of speech and action. Similarly, philosopher Juergen Habermas (1989) and anthropologist Setha Low (2000) focus on the accessibility of public space in relation to democratic life. In “The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces” Whyte stresses the importance of accessibility in public space and offers this definition: “A commonsense interpretation would be that the public could use the space in the same manner as it did any public space, with the same freedoms and the same constraints (1980, p.65).”

The relationship between public space and individual growth is addressed in “Public Places, Urban Spaces” where public space is defined as a “stage for social learning, personal development, and information exchange (Cormona et al, 2003, p. 109).” Cormona highlights the connection between public space and civic culture as well as its role as a symbol of citizenship and civil society (Cormona et al, 2003, p.124). French reiterates the belief that public space should fulfill a civic role. He describes public spaces as “places that instil a sense of civic trust, or concern for the quality of urban life (1989, p.11).” He specifically excludes spaces such as private gardens and amusement parks calling them “escape oriented” because they provide “a means of avoiding the realities around us” rather than fostering civic bonds (French, 1989, p. 11).

From an urban planning perspective, components such as personal freedom, societal connections, symbolism and meaning all need be incorporated into new public spaces. Goodsell (2003) notes that urban planners must focus on the public space’s overall affect on the quality of urban life. It must be functional, aesthetically pleasing, inclusive and democratic in order to fulfill the needs and desires of a variety of urban dwellers.

A method of evaluating all aspects of good public space is presented in “Public Space” (Carr et al, 1992). Based on earlier work by Kevin Lynch (Lynch, 1981), the evaluation calls for the fulfillment of three aims; needs, rights, and the development of meaning in public space. These three components are dependent on each other and build upon the issues addressed earlier, such as accessibility, creation of personal connections related to context and symbols, and the development of personal freedom related to how a space is used.

The Deterioration of Public Space Values: privatization, control and simulacra

The definition in the first section presents some of the values associated with public space and relates how those values, if upheld, contribute to the development of society. This section will highlight changes occurring in the public realm and in public space provision that threaten the ability of new public spaces to fulfill the characteristics discussed in the first section.

In contemporary North America the division between public and private spaces is not always obvious. Spaces once defined as public may appear to be private and vice versa, creating an ambiguous zone that has come to affect public life. Urban theorists, like those discussed in the first section believe that both the private and public realms should be fostered in cities so users can develop identities with self and society. Brill discusses this issue in detail. He suggests that the merging of the public and private sectors is not a new phenomenon, but the private sector's increasing influence on the public realm and the problems this poses has reached a crisis point (Brill, 1989, p.22). According to Brill, a consequence of this has been public spaces that are "subservient to, or seem appendages to private places (Brill, 1989, p.22)."

The topic of privatization of public space is documented in "Privately Owned Public Spaces" which analyzes spaces in New York City that were the result of incentive zoning, whereby developers were given concessions if they provided public space. Years after this process began, Kayden uncovers some of the problems with spaces created in this way and the inherent loss of civic character due to the increased role of the private sector. The study raises concerns about private interests providing a public benefit. In numerous privately owned public spaces in New York, the private element overpowers the public element and "denial cues" are evident. "Denial Cues" are described by Brill as a method of exclusion that can take both a passive and active form, such as security guards or the use of expensive materials that can create socio- economic differentiation.

In 'Cities for Sale' Boyer highlights the issue of place marketing as one aspect of modern city systems that has impacted public space. He links this phenomenon with the exclusionary and sanitized nature of public space in cities. Place marketing is related to inter-urban competition as a product of globalization and other economic factors. Gold and Ward define place promotion as "the conscious use of publicity and marketing to communicate selective images of specific geographical localities or areas to a target audience (Gold and Ward, p.2)". They suggest that cities have always needed to compete with each other on some level for resources and residents, but this has been accelerated by globalization and a shift to entrepreneurialism in cities.

The need for cities to promote themselves requires the creation of spaces that are marketable and appealing to particular people. The image being sold is not necessarily an accurate depiction of the city itself and often requires allusion to old symbols of the city that spark a sense of nostalgia and meaning. An example of this is the recent renewal of Times Square that makes reference to the cultural past of this historic place. However, it is a sanitized version that appeals to investors and tourists and lacks the character and true cultural elements of the old Times Square (Boyer, p.204)

This topic is addressed by Zukin in 'The culture of cities' in which she argues that culture has been adopted by cities to sell a specific image of the city. The re-creation of the cultural landscape has seen culturally significant spaces such as Central Park, the Broadway theatre district, and the Empire State building placed in the same category as Disney World and Sony Plaza (Zukin, 1995, p.3). She says that "by accepting these spaces without questioning their representations of urban life, we risk succumbing to a visually seductive, privatized culture (1995, p.3)." It is Zukin's fear that the dominance of the private sector in public life will lead to increased privatization and a loss of true cultural meaning, leading to the development of new superficial civic symbols (Zukin, 1995, p.34).

In "Variations on a Theme Park", Sorkin addresses this issue and identifies the influence of globalization as a factor in creating a new city that has a very specific set of goals: "The new city replaces anomaly and delight of such places with a universal particular, a generic urbanism inflected only by appliqué (Sorkin, 1992, p.xiii)." He characterizes these places in cities as "ageographic" and suggests that the new city overlooks the human needs of cities; "sacrificing the idea of the city as the site of community and human connection (Sorkin, 1992, pxiii)." Where French excluded the theme park as a real public space because of its private nature and exclusivity, Sorkin suggests that entire cities have become fantasy parks after undergoing a form of "disneyfication". Increasingly spaces are being created that fit into a narrow image of a city based on the desires of a small group of business elites. Consequently places become "gentrified, historicized, commodified, and privatized (Boyer, 1992, p.204)

In “The World in a Shopping Mall” Crawford examines the creation of downtown shopping malls as a replacement for other kinds of public spaces. The shopping mall is unable to fulfill many fundamental requirements of public spaces since it is a privately run space with its own rules and security and demands a certain type of activity that restricts the development of meaning. The characteristics of public space are being sacrificed for spaces that feel safe and clean and cater to a “homogeneous” clientele (Crawford, 1992, p.23).

Public Space in the Entrepreneurial City

Having addressed some of the issues at the core of the deterioration theory of public space, it is necessary to provide a review of the related economic and political concepts that underpin the beliefs discussed in the previous section.

Increasing privatization and the marketing of cities is related to a concept known as the entrepreneurial city. The evolution of the entrepreneurial city is closely linked to a new political structure that is defined by an opening up of responsibilities, once the domain of the government, to other agencies. This new “governance” structure is made up of a broad base of stakeholders interested in the development of the city. In his seminal essay on the entrepreneurial city Harvey writes that in order to overcome fiscal constraints cities have had to adopt entrepreneurial strategies (1989, p.4) He also suggests that the public/private partnership has become a mainstay of the entrepreneurial city, as it provides a new mechanism to foster urban growth. The operation of the entrepreneurial city is often compared to that of a firm due to the adoption of business practices (see Harvey, Painter, Leitner and Sheppard). It has roots in neo-liberal ideology as evident in its support of the private sector, belief in the market, and its focus on economic regeneration rather than ‘welfare’ issues (Hall and Hubbard, 1998, p.2).

As discussed earlier, the physical landscape of the city has been affected by these changes in a bid to improve its image to compete with other cities for investment. In relation to public spaces in particular, changes are characterized by increased control and

privatization in order create a new, often sanitized, image that is saleable. This “physical up-grading of the urban environment” (Harvey, p.16) leads to spaces that are managed, organised and governed differently and are divisive among “class, race and sexual lines (Hall and Hubbard, 1998, p.1).” Creating the right image of the city is paramount in a competitive market. Public spaces are affected by this ideology and dominant economic concerns can be seen to threaten social justice (Hall and Hubbard, 1998, p.19).

Chapter 3: Methodology

General Research Perspective

The research perspective took the form of a qualitative inquiry of Dundas Square. Due to the nature of the research question, the research type is a single case study. Throughout the investigation I was interested in uncovering the original objectives for the space, the process used to implement the space, and whether the original objectives were achieved. I have chosen a single evaluative case study for two reasons. Firstly, Dundas Square is the first square of its kind in Canada and it is my belief that Dundas Square represents the critical case and its success or failure could determine the creation and type of other public spaces in Canada. Secondly, after initial research it became clear that a comparative case study would prove difficult due to problems finding a suitable second case with a good basis for comparison. The model for the management of Dundas Square is based on a provincial example and it is the first time it has been applied to a public square.

The methods used were qualitative in focus including the use of primary and secondary documents, in depth interviews and fieldwork. There is a lack of quantitative material due to the fact that the case is new and any relevant statistics are not yet available for the square. Also time restraints prevented the use of a full survey.

The research context:

The fieldwork took place in Dundas Square which is located in downtown Toronto at the junction of Dundas St. and Yonge St. The square is bounded by Yonge St. (West), Dundas St. (North), Victoria St. (East), and Dundas Square St. (South) (See Figure 6). The intersection is the busiest in the city with over 100,000 cars and pedestrians passing through each day. It is located in the commercial centre of Toronto with the city's largest urban mall, the Eaton Centre, located across the street (See figure 5).

The square itself is 43,560 sq.ft. paved with granite and is built on top of a 260 vehicle parking lot. Other amenities include a canopied stage, discount ticket booth, tourist

information booth, 20 computer controlled water fountains, and a public washroom. Surrounding development includes the newly renovated Eaton Centre, the Gap, a seven storey media tower, H&M retail store, an interactive museum called the Olympic Spirit Complex, and the Hard Rock Café. Currently the north of the site is under construction where the Metropolis cinema complex is being built (completion is expected in spring 2007).



Figure 3: Media Tower



Figure 4: View facing North-East



Figure 5: Eaton Centre

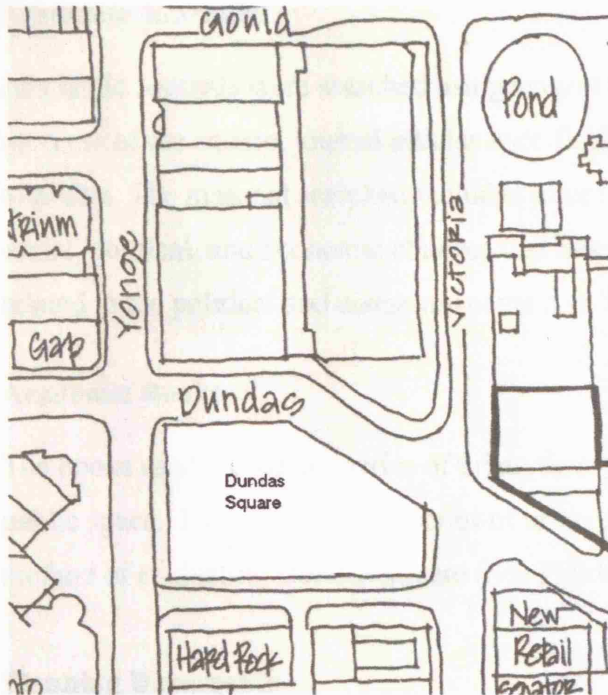


Figure 6: Context Map



Figure 7: Car Park



Figure 8: Toilet



Figure 9: Context Map

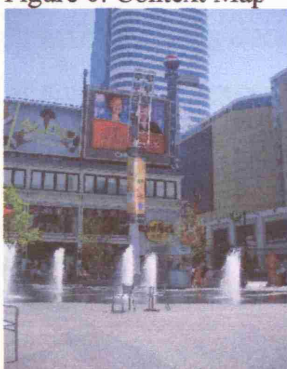


Figure 10: Fountains



Figure 11: View Facing West

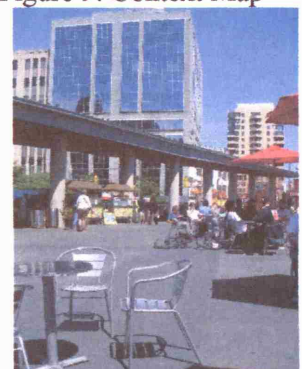


Figure 12: View Facing East

Methods:

The methods used for data collection included the use of primary data in the form of planning documents and observational fieldwork and secondary data such as newspaper articles, journal articles and books.

Newspaper articles:

Newspaper articles related to Dundas Square were searched using the Canadian Newsstand database.

Academic Journals:

Academic Journals were searched using several urban studies databases. Due to the newness of the square, journal articles specifically about Dundas Square were not available. The material searched included issues related to public space, such as the social, political, and economic changes that have affected its evolution as well as issues related to the political and economic context in Toronto.

Academic Books

The books used included a series of urban theory and urban design books related to public space. I also examined a series of urban design studies to uncover an appropriate method of evaluating Dundas Square (See Fieldwork).

Planning Documents

Primary planning documents were used to uncover the policies related to the design and implementation process for Dundas Square. This included specific material related to the design competition and the Yonge Street Regeneration Project. I also examined documents related to the Ontario Municipal Board hearing and the expropriation of properties on the site.

Interviews (See List of Interviews)

I conducted a series of in depth interviews with relevant stakeholders as well as urban professionals and academics. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. After the interviews were transcribed I divided the information into categories relating to the development stages, including conception, implementation, and outcome. I also looked for common themes throughout the discussion related to issues of privatization of public space, management, public/private partnerships, and growth strategies. I was also interested in discovering discrepancies between the responses provided in newspaper articles and in the interviews.

Fieldwork:

The fieldwork took the form of site observation in Dundas Square over a one year period. A series of visits were made to the square, both during the day and in the evening, totalling 47 hours. To aid with the observation I used an evaluation framework taken from “Public Space” (Carr et al, 1992) which is based on work by Kevin Lynch as seen in “Theory of Good City Form” (Lynch, 1981). This particular method of evaluation was chosen due to its focus on issues that go beyond the design of the square and consider whether a space satisfies users’ needs and rights as well as if the space has the potential to develop meaning. Its focus on how a space satisfies users’ rights is particularly relevant to my study of Dundas Square given the management structure of the space. Similarly, the third issue addressed in the framework, the development of meaning, relates to deeper issues that are sometimes left out of urban design analysis. Further details about the evaluation framework are provided in Appendix A.

I used this checklist for my own personal evaluation of Dundas Square as well as using it as a basis to ask questions to people at the site. In total I had 37 informal discussions over a one year period. I recognize that problems arise from the inability to ensure a random sampling of people and this was taken into consideration in the application. However, it was one method of gaining access to people’s views of the site. In order to fully evaluate

the square I became interested in how it functions, as well as the signs and symbols that are evident in the space.

Chapter Summary

The methodology outlined above provided the best format for conducting a case study of Dundas Square. The dependency on qualitative research is acknowledged and will be taken into consideration in the final conclusions. The interviews provided invaluable insight into the project and helped uncover hidden motives and objectives that were not discussed in the literature relating to Dundas Square. The fieldwork allowed an understanding of how the space is used as well as providing the opportunity to analyze the signs and symbols in the space. The next chapter provides an analysis of the results of the research.

Chapter 4: Analysis

As stated in Chapter 1, the aim of this dissertation is to examine Dundas Square as a new public space in Toronto. This chapter sets out the results from the research process in relation to the different issues addressed in the research question. Firstly, what was learned in relation to the conception of Dundas Square, followed by issues related to the implementation of the programme, and finally the results related to the analysis of the outcome. Together the stages that are examined will help provide answers to whether or not the project has succeeded and for whom.

Conception:

Goals/Objectives

The first stage of my research involved looking into the conception stage for Dundas Square. The intention was to uncover the original goals for the square that would present a basis for analyzing the outcome. From the beginning the various stakeholders expressed a dual function for the square. It was envisioned as a commercially driven part of the BIA, as well as a safe, beautiful, public gathering place for Torontonians.

My initial investigation of current newspaper articles uncovered many different descriptions of the square ranging from the new “heart of Toronto” and “a place to bring Torontonians together (McCabe Lokos, Toronto Star, May 29th 2003) to a commercial focus describing the new square as “a shopping square” (Hume, Toronto Star, Dec. 20th, 2000).

However, the force behind the project was the councillor for Rosedale -Downtown, Kyle Rae, whose ward included the land for Dundas Square. When asked directly about the objectives for creating Dundas Square Kyle Rae admitted that firstly the square was “to create new opportunities for retail on Yonge St.” He explained that this meant both the modernization of floor plates by combining plots of land to create larger retail premises, as well as creating a new commercial environment. And secondly the goal was to create

an open space that would create a respite. He admits that the square was trying to do two things at the same time.

Similarly, Gary Wright the Project Manager for Dundas Square, focused on the commercial objectives for the square. He notes that the deterioration of Yonge Street became an issue for City Hall and the Yonge Street Business Improvement Association (YSBIA) after years of economic decline along the street. The creation of a square was envisioned as a method of improving the commercial prospects along Yonge as well as controlling crowds outside of the Eaton Centre. Wright states: “We wanted a square because we wanted an open space. We wanted an open space so that there would be formal room for people to gather and for activities.” He is candid about the desire to create a space with opportunities for the private sector and suggests that the intention was to create a space that imitated the entrepreneurialism of Yonge Street.

The competition brief for the design of Dundas Square emphasized the close link between Dundas square and the ongoing Yonge Street Regeneration. The language used in the document suggests that the square is a mechanism to achieve the goals of the business improvement area (Competition Brief, September 1998, p.2) which are to improve “the appearance, safety and cleanliness of Yonge street to promote the area to new retailers and to encourage potential redevelopment opportunities (Request for Proposals, July 15th 1997, p1).” The brief states that the design should reflect the “goals of the redevelopment project,” the “activities that will take place in the square,” “the public objectives” and finally the “requirements imposed by the construction of an underground parking garage (Competition Brief, September 1998, p. 2).” As well as being a “memorable place of beauty and identity” a “highly animated place” with “a sense of safety and security (Competition Brief, September 1998, p. 7).”

Precedent

In order to gain a better understanding of the objectives for the square I was interested in uncovering a precedent. The review of newspaper articles from as early as 1994 indicate that Times Square was used as a model for Dundas Square. It is difficult to find an article on Dundas Square that does not also include a reference to New York's Times Square and the revitalization project of that famous intersection. In 2003 journalist Christopher Hutsul commented that "The push to turn the corner of Yonge-Dundas St. into Canada's version of Times Square must be obvious to anyone who's walked by lately (Hutsul, Toronto Star, September 6th, 2003)."



Figure 13: Rendering of Times Square



Figure 14: Rendering of Dundas Square

As well as proclaiming Dundas Square the new Times Square, Kyle Rae also listed Bryant Park as a precedent. He indicated that it was used as an example of how to overcome issues of crime and drug use in a public space as well as for its management structure that allows the space to be used for events. Rae suggested that Dundas Square is meant to be a more programmable version of Bryant Park.

Partnership Model

The final analysis of the conception stage involved uncovering the development of the partnerships needed to implement the project. The partnership structure is a public/private partnership model with the public sector represented by the city of Toronto and Ryerson University and the private sector by private property owners and developers. In

1993 the Yonge Street Business and Resident Association (later known as the Yonge Street Business Improvement Association) was founded by local property owners who approached City Hall about the increasing drug and crime problems on Yonge Street. A solution came in the form of the Yonge Dundas Redevelopment that would lead to the creation of Dundas Square (Approved by Council in 1996).

In order to obtain the funds for Dundas Square a partnership was needed with the private sector. Pen Equity Management Inc. became the first private partner with the city and were contracted to build a 30 screen cinema complex on Parcel A (See Figure 15). The project was to cost \$90 million dollars and would help fund the creation of Dundas Square on Parcel D (See Figure 15). This stage was followed by a request for proposals issued by the city of Toronto in order to find a private developer willing to “expertly design, finance, build, market and lease/sell their proposed developments.” The call was answered by the International Olympic Committee who agreed to build an interactive Olympic Spirit venue on Parcel C. At the time of the research, Parcel B remained in city ownership. Similarly, a partnership formed between the City of Toronto and the Toronto Parking Authority to build and operate a three storey parking garage underneath the square.

During the process of expropriating the 10 properties on parcels A and D negotiations were made with Ryerson University who owned part of the land on parcel A. Ryerson University agreed to sell the land to the city in return for use of the new cinema complex by Ryerson film students.

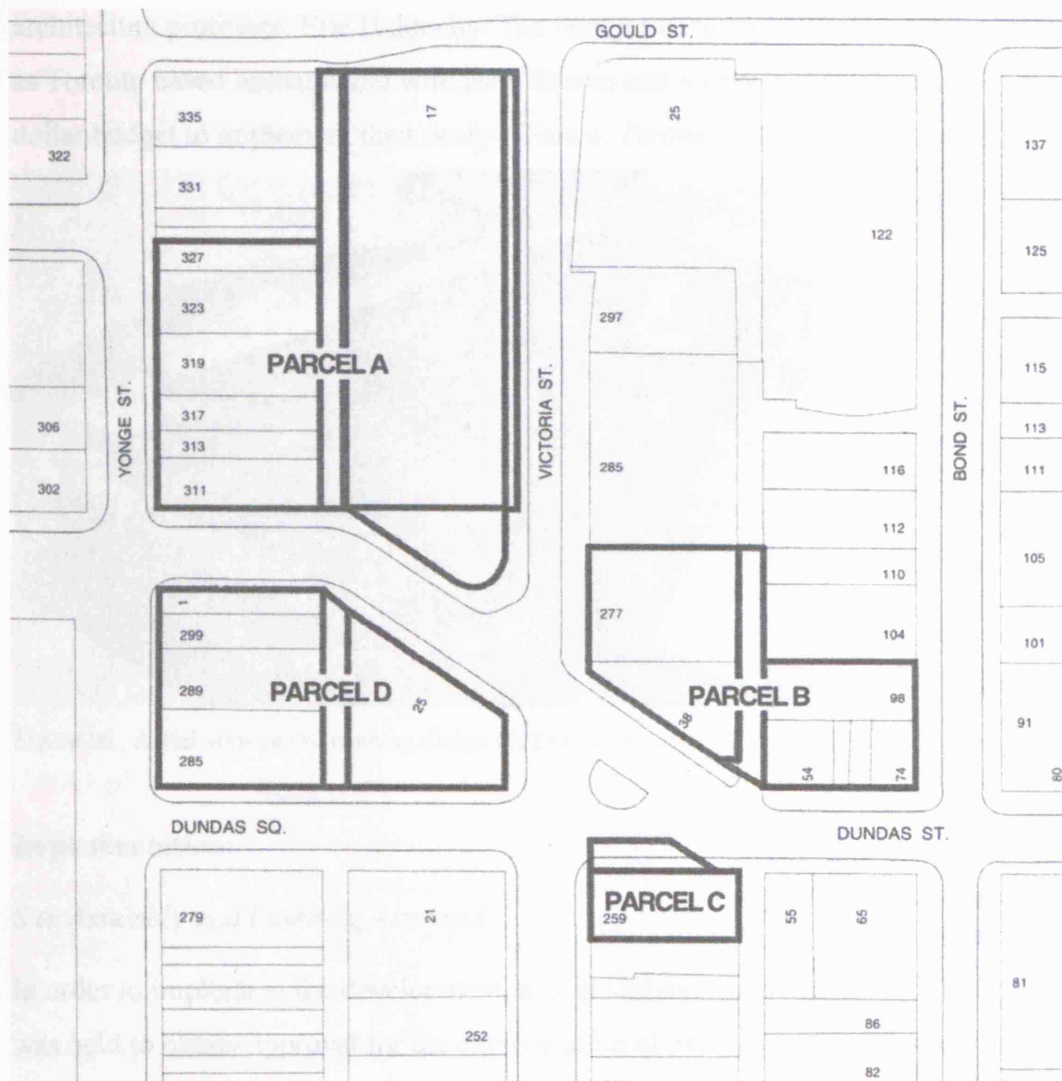


Figure 15: Map of Land Parcels for the Redevelopment of Yonge and Dundas

Design Competition

Final analysis of the conception stage involved investigating the design competition for Dundas Square. The design competition was an independent competition in the sense that no jury members were from the City of Toronto. However, the competition was organized by the city's private consultant, Ron Soskolne, who was also a jury member and would later become a member of the management board for the square. Soskolne launched the two-stage National Design Competition for Dundas Square on July 11th 1998 (Maloney, Toronto Star, 1998, Jul 10). The jury also consisted of urban designer Karen Aischuler, architect Susan Kim, architecture critic Gary Michael Dault, and

architecture professor, Eric Haldenby. The winners of the second stage were announced as Toronto based husband and wife team Brown and Storey and were given 2.5 million dollar budget to implement their design (Hume, Toronto Star, 1999, Aug. 29th).

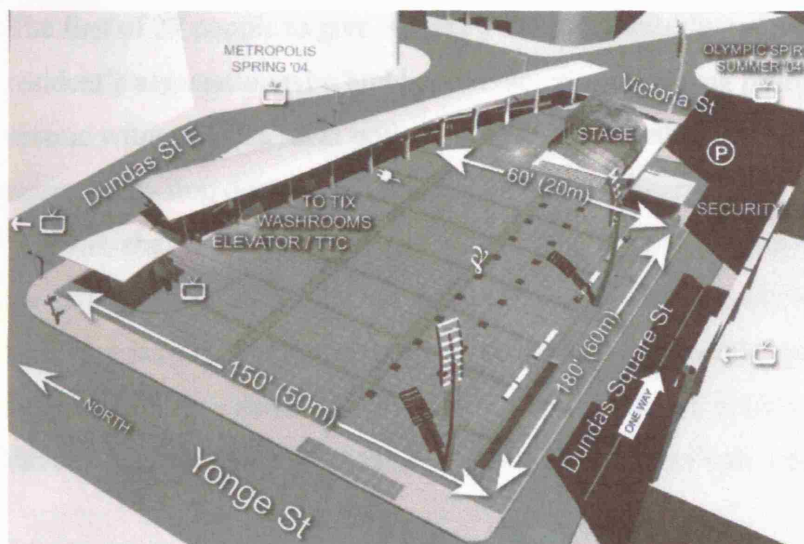


Figure 16: Aerial view of the winning design for Dundas Square

Implementation:

Site Assembly and Planning Approval

In order to implement the development, a joint Ontario Municipal Board¹ (OMB) hearing was held to obtain approval for the expropriation of existing properties and to gain planning approval for the land. In August 1998, the Ontario Municipal Board ruled in favour of expropriating 10 properties from site A and D to make room for the cinema complex and public square (Maloney, Toronto Star, 1998, July 10th). The council voted 38-7 to proceed with land acquisition at a cost of \$30 million, 14.4 million to be paid by taxpayers.

In order to gain approval the city highlighted the social goals rather the underlying economic goals for the regeneration. When interviewed, Gary Wright stated that it was

¹ The Ontario Municipal Board is a board of provincially appointed members that are called upon to solve community planning issues including changes to official plans, zoning by-laws, subdivision plans, consents to sever land minor variances from local by-laws development charges applications for aggregate licences, and compensation for expropriated land.

the city's responsibility to prove that the intervention was necessary: "We had to demonstrate that there was a problem and we had the solution." He explained that the argument made by the city's lawyer, Steven Jacobek, was based on a social imperative. The first of 27 people to give evidence was a community volunteer and member of the resident's association who highlighted the crime and drug problems in the area. The second witness was a local police officer who had taken part in "Project Broom," an operation to stop drug dealing in the area. In my interview with Professor Evelyn Ruppert, she was highly critical of the "moral stance" that was taken to seek approval for the project. She suggested that given the differing desires of the various stakeholders, it was necessary to uncover a unifying theme that would satisfy everyone. By drawing on moral issues such as crime and safety, it was difficult to make a case against the development. She refers to this as the "moralization of space and conduct."

Management Board and Funding Model

After approval, the City began to consider ways to manage the square. Due to the fact that Dundas Square was to be run as a programmable events space, it had to be managed differently from other public squares in Canada. In newspaper articles Dundas Square is referred to as the first privately managed public space in Canada. However the research revealed that the management board is a body of the government and is based on an existing provincial system.

Kyle Rae compares the management of Dundas Square to that of community centres in Ontario. He explains that the buildings are city owned, like the square, with a management board of directors who are appointed by the city after nomination by the neighbourhood. The centres are responsible for delivering programs on behalf of the city in the same way that the square is managed for use by the public. The management board is then given money from the city for core administration, but is responsible for acquiring the rest of the funding through fundraising and grants. When this system is applied to Dundas Square it works in a similar way with the city providing core funding of \$500,000 and the management board is responsible for acquiring the rest, in this case by demanding fees for the use of the square. According to board member Barbara Kaplan

the amount needed to be raised to cover costs is approximately \$1 million. Rae explains that the private element refers to the YSBIA taking a leadership role by nominating board members that are then appointed by the City. However, he does explain that the YSBIA is closely linked to the city and that he is a board member.

In my interview with Gary Wright he suggested that the model and the decision to create a square that was run like a business, in the sense that it should be profit making, relates to the desire to recognize the entrepreneurship of Yonge Street: “We wanted to recognize that there’s an entrepreneurial vibrancy and innovation that happens. We needed to have the square and the management of the square imbued with that sort of commercial activity.” He acknowledged that running a square using this model would lead to a different relationship with the public and hence a different kind of public space. Wright explains: “At the end of the day the city, should it choose to be heavy handed, has entire control over it. But the city in a way operates at arms length and that allows that entrepreneurial commercial sense to come into the operation. Where both from a revenue perspective, which we want, we want them to be as entrepreneurial as it can be to reduce the cities costs.”

Evelyn Ruppert expressed concerns with the implications of such a model for democratic rights due to the fact that members are appointed after being nominated by the YSBIA who are the main stakeholders in the project. She explained: “These are extra powers granted to groups that are narrowly focused on investment. Delegating authority is problematic and it does infringe on democratic rights.”

The Board of Management consists of the following members:

Councillor for Ward 27 - Toronto Central

-Kyle Rae

Downtown Yonge Street Business Improvement Area

- Ron Soskolne (Chair)
- Arron Barberian (Vice-Chair)
- Anita Cortese
- Keith Travis

Member of Resident's Association

- Barbara Kaplan

Ryerson University

-Currently Vacant

Yonge Street Mission

-David Adcock

Toronto Theatre Alliance

-David Walleth

Ex-Officio Members

Toronto Parking Authority

-Lorne Persiko

Facilities and Real Estate Division, Corporate Services Department

-Mike McCoy

Economic Development, Culture and Tourism Department

-Eva Pyatt

Toronto Police Services

-Superintendent Paul Gottschalk

Fee Structure

The need for the square to supplement the city funds required the use of the space as a business venture. The renting out of the space for events has been a controversial decision and has been criticized for impinging on the public nature of the square.

A Promotional Package released by the Management Board offers the following description:

“Designated as a public space for residents and tourists to enjoy, the Square can also be booked for special events and private functions of any size.”

The square is advertised as being available year round for events, including community celebrations, theatrical events, concerts, receptions, product launches and promotions.

Table 1 sets out the fee structure for different times of the year.

Table 1: Permit Fees (See appendix B for full details)

| | | |
|--|----------------------------|------------|
| May 16 th - October 10 th December 1 st - January 1 st | 7:00 am - 7:00 am full day | \$2250 |
| February 28 th - May 15 th October 11 th - November 30 th | 7:00 am - 7:00 am full day | \$1485 |
| January 2 - February 27 th | 7:00 am - 7:00 am full day | \$ 742. 50 |

Discounts are offered for the use by registered charities (25%) and non-profit organizations (15%).

The fact that the space can be rented out for private use presents problems in terms of users accessing the square when they desire. Newspaper articles featured in the Toronto Star noted the closure of the square for the Virgin mobile launch and the use by the investment company Cadillac Fairview for a private event in which a tent was erected and areas were cordoned off (Toronto Star, March 2nd, 2005). This problem was acknowledged by city planner Gary Wright and councillor Kyle Rae, however, they suggested that it is a different kind of public space that Torontonians need to get used to. As Gary Wright noted: “It’s not offensive to me that there are days when the square has been booked for a private event and most of the square is cordoned off and not accessible. Some of it is always accessible, but part of it becomes privatized in that sense

for a short period of time relative to the whole year. And that's the balance between wanting revenue versus wanting complete public activity on the square."

Outcome:

It became clear early in the research process that the success of the square depended upon many factors. In terms of analyzing the physical elements of the space it becomes evident that the design is representative of the specific type of space that was needed to make a money generating space. The design combined with the management of the space has created problems in terms of affecting how it is used and by whom. From a purely architectural perspective critics have praised its clean lines and modernist aesthetic. Toronto Architecture critic Christopher Hume praised the design in his column in the Toronto Star (1999, August 29th). The space has also won a Canadian Architectural award of excellence indicating its acceptance by the design community.

Although the space's minimalism is conducive to a programmable space, part of the problem with the space is that it tries to do too many things. In my interview with the former mayor of Toronto and journalist, John Sewell, he stressed this problem: "I suspect that part of the problem is designing a space that is made for performance. This creates problems in itself. And that's the approach they took."

Site Observation

In order to fully analyze the space, part of my research involved spending a total of 47 hours in the square over a one year period. Throughout the site observation I used a framework for evaluating public space as set out in "Public Space", (Carr et al, 1992). (See Appendix A for a full description of the evaluation framework).

It is important to note that analyzing the aesthetics of the space posed two problems. Firstly, due to the fact that the space is not entirely finished (construction of the Metropolis on the North corner will complete the enclosure). Secondly, judging aesthetics is subjective and although the square has been praised by the design community, the general public hold varied opinions. William H. Whyte noted in his

investigation of small public spaces that in comparison to other components aesthetics had a minimal affect on the usage of a public space (Whyte, 1980, p.24). Therefore, the aesthetics became a secondary consideration and the main interest of the investigation was the ability or inability for the square to connect with the public, which related to its ability to satisfy needs, rights and development meaning.

Initial Observations

After spending time in the square my first observation was that the amount of people in the square at any given time is minor in comparison to the numbers passing by. This was corroborated by numerous newspaper articles that indicated the low user numbers (See Blackett, Kuitenbrouwer, Wallace, Rochon). The extreme conditions of the Canadian climate led to dramatic changes in usage throughout the seasons. During the Autumn and Winter months the square is used most often as a shortcut to get from one street to another.

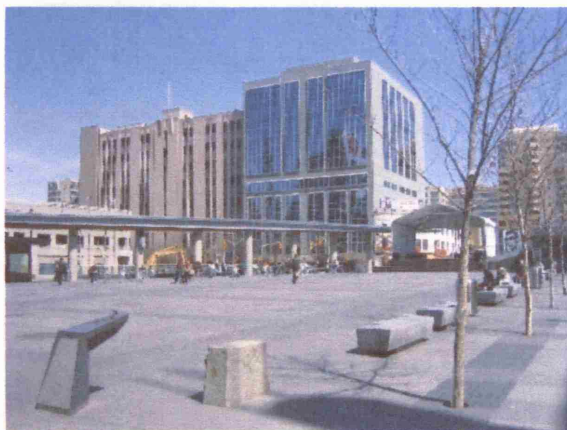


Figure 17: Autumn



Figure 18: Winter



Figure 19: Spring



Figure 20: Summer

The most successful aspect of the space is the fountains. People walking along Yonge Street are often drawn into the square to take a closer look.



Figure 21: Computerized Fountains

Another key observation was how users entered the square. The square is most open at the western edge along Yonge Street, however, most people walking south along Yonge chose to enter the square at the south-east corner where the tourist booth and fountains provided a less conspicuous entrance. Consequently this edge of the square becomes a “dead zone”; too open and intimidating for most people to enter from.

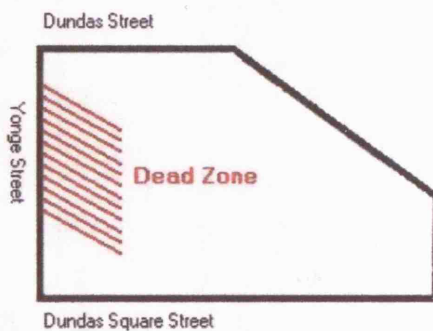


Figure 22: Diagram of “Dead Zone”



Figure 23: Photograph of “Dead Zone”


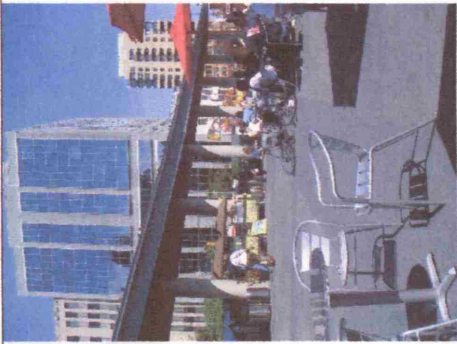
Summary of Observations:


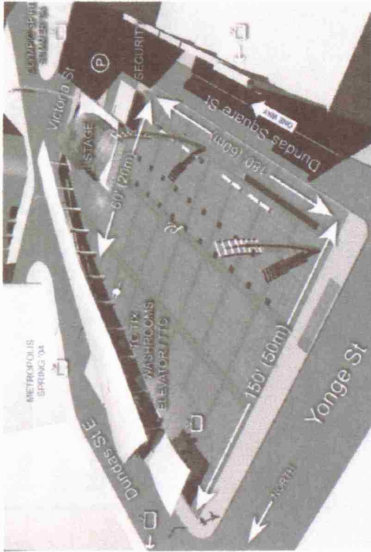

The following table summarizes the conclusions drawn from the observations and casual conversations with both the users (people inhabiting the space) and passers by (walking by the square on surrounding streets).

Needs in Public Space

The first category involved determining whether basic user needs had been fulfilled by the space.

Table 2: Needs in Public Space

| Needs in Public Space | Observation Notes: | |
|--|---|--|
| Comfort | <p>Overall Dundas Square satisfies the need of comfort. It provides adequate access to sun and shade, shelter from the elements, seating (moveable and fixed). A sense of security is ensured by the presence of guards on site and the openness of the site which prevents the use of the space for anti-social purposes. However, one could argue that it feels open and secure for some people but not for everyone (i.e. middle class vs “undesirables”).</p> |   <p>Figure 24: Fixed Benches</p> <p>Figure 25: Patio style seating</p> |
| Relaxation | <p>Although located at the busiest intersection in the city with 62, 1000 pedestrians and 55,500 vehicles passing through daily, the creation of an open space does provide a space to sit down and relax while shopping. The water fountains help to drown out some of the noise, however, the traffic is never quite forgotten.</p> | |
| Passive Engagement with environment | <p>It became evident that one of the common activities is people watching. As indicated previously, the numbers of people passing by on Yonge Street is far greater than the number using the square, providing a stream of entertainment. Also the use of the square to hold events, both movies and music performances provide an opportunity for passive engagement.</p> | |

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Active Engagement with environment-</p> | <p>Similarly, the use of the square for a variety of events such as week-end markets, cultural fairs, and protests allows users to become actively involved within the environment. Socializing is made possible through the provision of seating. (tables and chairs more successful at creating a social setting than the marble benches)</p>  <p>Figure 26: Anti-War Protest 2002</p> |
| <p>Discovery-</p> | <p>In terms of fulfilling needs the space was least successful at creating a sense of discovery. This relates to the fact that the square is laid out with designated areas for specific purposes. Also the presence of security and by-laws that prevent certain behaviours restricts the movement of people. If people enter the space it is for a specific purpose.</p>  <p>Figure 27: Aerial view of square's amenities</p>  <p>Figure 28: On -Site Private Security Booth</p> |

Rights in Public Space

The second category, determining if rights are fulfilled in the square, is more revealing in terms of uncovering some of the problems with having a “money-making” public space and how this compromises the “publicness” of the square.

Table 3: Rights in Public Space


| Rights in Public Space | Observations |
|--|--|
| <p>Access:</p> <p>The accessibility of a space is analyzed in three categories: physical access, visual access and symbolic access.</p> | <p>Physical: Dundas square is available to the public without physical barriers unless a private event is in progress in which case a portion of the square is cordoned off. This presents problems because the square appears as a private space on some event days.</p> <p>Visual: The square is visually open from the West, North and South (See Figure 29) creating connections to the Eaton Centre and Yonge Street. However the East side, which was referred to in the interviews as the area from which drug dealers filter into the downtown core, is less visually open (back of stage). (See Figure 30 and 31)</p> <div></div> <p>Figure 29: View from south-west corner of Dundas Square</p> |



Figure 30: View from North East



Figure 31: View from the East

Symbolic: The symbolic cues in the space relate both to the people using the space and the types of activities that surround the space. Throughout the fieldwork it became evident that the main users were tourists (confirmed by security guard who estimated that 70% of users are tourists). It did feel like a tourist space with countless numbers of people stopping to read a map, take photos of the fountains, access the ticket booth, or tourist information booth. Secondly, the upgrading of the Eaton Centre and the removal of discount stores as part of the Yonge Street Regeneration, have created a space with flashy retail chains that are geared more toward a middle class clientele. On a symbolic level the cues indicate that the space is for tourists and middle class shoppers. This is also emphasized by the use of billboards advertising L'Oreal beauty products and sports utility vehicles.

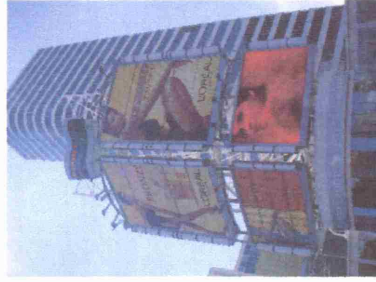


Figure 32: East Facing Billboards



Figure 33: View of new retail along Yonge St.

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <p>Freedom of Action:</p> | <p>Due to the presence of security guards, behaviour does feel restricted. There is the sense that you are being watched and controlled. A couple of times I witnessed people trying to rollerblade in the space and they were promptly asked to leave. Similarly, action is severely restricted on event days when certain users are prevented from entering parts of the square. Also the prescribed lay out of the square prevents freedom to use space as one desires. This is referred to as “specificity of spaces” that restrict users (Carr et al, 1992) As noted by Gary Wright you must engage with the space on a schedule and within its boundaries.</p> |
| <p>Claim</p> | <p>It is difficult to lay claim to the square, firstly because it does not feel public due to the presence of security guards restricting behaviour (enforcing by-laws), and also because of the use for private events. It does feel like the space has been claimed already by the management board who dictates behaviour and use. Colin Berman, a local landscape architect suggested that the space felt like it had been claimed by the city to make money.</p> |
| <p>Change</p> | <p>The nature of the design to accommodate specific events prevents it from being changed easily. It allows for small scale manipulation through the existence of moveable furniture, but the placement of the stage, ticket booth, tourism office and security booth prevent large scale change and manipulation of the site.</p> |



Figure 34: Olympic Spirit Event taking place in the Square



Figure 35: View of Stage


**Ownership and
Disposition:**

The management structure of the space prevents users from gaining a sense of ownership over the site. The ownership seems to lie in the hands of the management board who is physically and symbolically represented by the private security guard. The fact that the space is a public space, owned and essentially managed by the city for its citizens is not evident. A member of the public I interviewed made the statement that “the public has no control of the space.”

Meaning in Public Space




The final category relates to the development of meaning in public space and involves the ability to use the space to satisfy comfort and rights, as well as analyzing its affect on ones' life through the development of connections and bonds.

Table 4: Meaning in Public Space

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Meaning in Public Space | Observations |
| Legibility | <p>According to Carr legibility is necessary for the development of meaning. The legibility of a site is dependent on cues that relay a message. The cues around Dundas Square include the buildings that surround around it. These are mainly retail and indicate that this is a shopping /commercial space. This is also reinforced by the presence of billboards that surround the space. The space is lacking in cues that indicate that it is a public space for Torontonians. This is partly due to the ambiguity about what the space is; the over programmed space with stage etc. seems to confuse the viewer. One person I interviewed commented that the café style chairs are reminiscent of a private space and believed she would have to buy something in order to sit there.</p>  <p>Figure 36: Patio style seating with umbrellas create a café atmosphere</p> |
| Resonate w/ Lives | <p>Whether or not Dundas Square resonates with lives is something that needs to be determined over time. It depends on the “patterns of use” that develop that would help users to associate the space with life events (eg. Times Square and New Years). Although, one person did comment that this would never happen because as it stands “the space has no soul.”</p> |

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Relevance w/ lives | <p>When analyzing whether Dundas Square has relevance with the lives of Torontonians, one needs to consider firstly if the space is useable, which relates to rights and needs and secondly whether it connects with the users' personal context. The ability/inability to address rights was discussed previously. In terms of relating to a specific context, for example Toronto, Canada, in the year 2005, the space appears neutral and is similar to other commercial spaces seen around world such as Times Square or Sony Centre in Berlin.</p> <div>  </div> <div> <p>Figure 37: Sony Centre</p> </div> <div>  </div> <div> <p>Figure 38: Times Square</p> </div> <p>There's nothing that indicates that this is a space in Toronto, Canada. The features surrounding the square include international chains such as H&M, the Hardrock Café, the Gap, and Sears.</p> |
| Comfort | <p>As discussed previously, the square fulfills basic needs, but rights have been sacrificed to create a space conducive to staging events.</p> |

| | |
|--|---|
| Place Identity and Rootedness | <p>In order for a space to develop meaning for its users a sense of belonging needs to be established. The identity of a space is necessary for these connections to form. The overwhelming identity of Dundas Square is a commercial space. This relates both to the fact that it is connected to the shopping destination that surrounds it, but also the fact that the space is run like a business. The development of deeper bonds, such as those that form in a civic space, such as Toronto's Nathan Philips square are not possible.</p> <div>  </div> <div> <p>Figure 39: Nathan Philips Square and City Hall</p> </div> <div>  </div> <div> <p>Figure 40: View of Eaton Centre from Dundas Square</p> </div> |
| Group Connections | <p>The development of meaning through group connections usually refers to use/association with the space by one group, known as “cultural appropriation.” The one dominant group in Dundas Square are tourists. Dundas Square appears as a tourist space, rather than a space for Toronto residents.</p> |
| Connections to a larger society | <p>Reference to a larger society can be created through religious, cultural, or civic connections. As mentioned, Dundas square does not serve an exclusively civic function like Nathan Philip's Square. Neither is it a religious space, like Piazza San Marco in Venice. And there is no specific cultural reference to Canada or Toronto. It does not even reference a historic/cultural past like Times Square.</p> |

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Symbolic Values | <p>The one dominant feature in Dundas Square are the billboards that surround the site. These seem to highlight the fact that this is a commercial space. To me and to some people I interviewed these were seen as symbols of capitalism and a commercial world. Landscape Architect, Colin Berman suggested that Dundas Square is a symbol of the commodification of the city; the selling of the public realm to make money.</p> <div>  </div> <div>  </div> <div>  </div> <p>Figure 41, 42, 43: Images of Advertisements Surrounding the Square</p> |
| Psychological Biological | <p>The creation of psychological connections relates to the use of archetypes to create a psychological bond. The interviews and literature indicated the desire to evoke an image of a European Square, however, this is less evident in the space. Square does not feel like a European square which in part relates to the design, proportion and use.</p> <p>Biological: According to Carr a physiological connection is usually made through the use of greenery and the body's ability to relate to nature. Dundas Square consists mostly of hard granite paving, with a few planters and four plane trees along the South side. The changing of seasons is not evident in the square and physiological connections are not fostered.</p> |
| Connections to Other Worlds | <p>This relates to a connection to a fantasy world that takes you outside of the current reality and evokes meaning, imagination, delight and fantasy. The commercial nature of the square and the presence of billboards alludes to the fantasy world of advertising and the superficial and unattainable promises of the advertisements.</p> |

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusions

This chapter restates the problem being studied and provides an overview of the research methods and a summary of the results. The final section presents a discussion of the results and conclusions.

Problem Statement Revisited:

As stated in Chapter 1, this dissertation examined the creation of a new of public space in Toronto. The intention was to evaluate the success of the programme based on the objectives for the space as revealed in the conception stage. The analysis of the implementation and outcome provided a basis for determining the overall success of the project and if the goals had been achieved. Throughout the dissertation the underlying focus was to determine for whom the space is successful.

Review of Methodology

The research was undertaken in the form of a case study. It relied on qualitative methods of research, such as in depth interviews with key stakeholders and urban thinkers, review of planning documents, newspaper articles, academic journals and books. The research also included observations at the site guided by an evaluation framework as outlined in Chapter 3.

Summary of Results

Analysis of the conception phase revealed the original goals for the square to be both a civic space, functioning as a public square, and an entrepreneurial venture that would reinvent the commercial climate on Yonge Street. The initial analysis uncovered two precedents, Times Square and Bryant Park. The reference to Times Square is used to evoke images of that vibrant cultural centre and the revitalization of a once seedy junction. The stakeholders looked to Bryant Park as an example of how to manage a public space also used as an events venue. The conception phase involved securing a partnership structure that would allow the city to gain access to both the land and funds in order to see the square and surrounding development come to fruition. The city appealed

to private developers to implement the project, initiating the public/private partnership. The final phase in the conception stage involved the staging of a national competition for the design of the square. The competition was an independent competition, judged by an international design panel. However, the design had to fulfill the brief requirements that reflected the economic goals of the Yonge Street Business Improvement Association (YSBIA) and the desire to use the space as an events venue.

The implementation phase involved the acquisition of the land and properties by the City of Toronto. It became evident that a social stance was used to justify the intervention. The Ontario Municipal Board hearing focused primarily on the social imperative and the need to address crime in the area. However, the management structure and the desire to use the square as a money-making venue emphasized the economic motives behind the project. Although previously considered a privately managed public space, the square uses a management model that is closely connected to the city and is not an independent entity. However, extra control is given to the YSBIA which has the power to nominate board members. The economic need for the square to function as a business venture necessitates the renting out of the space, thus rendering the space private/semiprivate for certain periods.

Throughout the fieldwork it became evident that the square satisfies the basic needs of a good public space, but fails in acknowledging the rights of the public. For example, the high level of on-site private security and the existence of special by-laws, leads to a highly restrictive and exclusionary space. These issues combined with the commercial nature of the space, including the presence of billboards and international retail outlets, affects the ability for users to develop bonds, memories, and connections to the space, leading to a lack of meaning in Dundas Square. The physical upgrading of the environment and the creation of Dundas Square ultimately create a space that is for a specific type of user: the middle class shopper and tourist.

Discussion of Results and Final Conclusions

Although Dundas Square is an initiative of the city with a city appointed management board, the nature of the project, including the fact that it is run as a money-making venture, its private connections and leadership control by the Yonge Street Business Improvement Association, affects the way the Square is perceived by the public. The seemingly contradictory objectives, to create a commercial space and a public square have created an ambiguous space where public and private boundaries are ill-defined. The square has succeeded in hosting events, ranging from concerts, photo shoots and corporate functions. However, this has been to the detriment of the second objective to create a useable and accessible public space. As suggested in the hypothesis the motives for creating Dundas Square correspond with improving the economic conditions of the downtown, rather than creating a civic space that unites Torontonians.

Dundas Square and the Failure to Create Public Space

In the literature review good public space was defined as open space in the city that is available for public action, accessible, functional, inclusive, and establishes connections with users that can lead to the development of meaning (see Moughtin, Cormona et al, Arendt, Habermas, Whyte, Carr, Lynch, Goodsell, Low, French). In Dundas Square, almost all of these elements have been sacrificed in some way to serve the commercial rather than social objectives.

Firstly, the design of the square reflects the need for the space to be multi-functional in order to accommodate money making elements such as the stage and ticket booth. This is referred to in the observation framework as “specificity of spaces” and interferes with people’s ability to use the space as they desire, affecting rights and the development of deeper bonds. Similarly, the existence of private security guards restricts the use of the square and restricts some users entirely. The increased security measures found in public spaces in general and evident in Dundas Square, hinders the fulfillment of rights in terms of who can access the space and what can be accomplished there. The definition by Whyte highlighted in the literature review suggests that in order for a space to be

accessible it must be usable in the same way as other public spaces in the city, such as streets and parks. This is not the case for Dundas Square as the square has its own set of by-laws that restrict certain activities allowed in other public spaces. For example, if someone wants to ride a bike through the square they need to apply for a permit from the city. There is also the widely publicized case of two university students who were expelled from the square for drawing a peace sign on the granite paving. This was an “illegal” act in the square. However, they were told that it was acceptable to chalk on the sidewalk around the square, as this fell outside of the Dundas Square jurisdiction (Duncan, 2003, p.26).

Furthermore, the systematic exclusion of “undesirables” seems a common occurrence in order to preserve the image of the space. I witnessed the forced removal of so called “crackheads” by security on two occasions in the square. During my interview with the security guard, he admitted that these individuals are asked to leave on almost a daily basis if they appear to be affecting the enjoyment of the square by other users. After three warnings the individual can be expelled from the square for a set period of time. The need to keep the space safe from “undesirables” is related to the use of the square for commercial purposes. A negative image would interfere with the desire for organizations to use the square as a venue.

As John Sewell noted, Dundas Square does not differ much from the Eaton Centre across the street. They are both tightly controlled spaces with a commercial focus that appeal to people from a certain demographic background. As Crawford observed, shopping malls are becoming the new public spaces, raising issues of exclusion, privatization and sterilization of the public realm (Crawford, 1992). The use of billboards surrounding the square to both evoke a connection to Times Square and provide an additional revenue source for the city, serves to further alienate some users. It creates a superficial space that connects to a commercial culture rather than allowing deeper bonds to develop. The goal to create a commercial space is so pervasive that the space is used in a particular way and by particular users. Dundas square reflects the new type of public space common in “entrepreneurial cities” that are defined by their modes of growth and economically driven development.

As discussed in the literature review the increasing privatization of public space leads to ambiguous spaces that result from a dependency on private interests to develop the public realm. Kayden's description of problems associated with privately owned public spaces in New York presents similar issues to those seen in Dundas Square despite the fact that Dundas Square is publicly owned. Similarly, the square's private nature reflects the fact that a public/private partnership was needed to create the space and the project is closely related to the goals of the Yonge Street Business Improvement Association. The YSBIA has control over the square and the management board. It is evident that the YSBIA wanted a square that would promote the commercial interests of the area, which involved removing "undesirables" from the downtown core and offering a space for shoppers of a specific demographic. In fact, the ward councillor admitted crime was displaced to outlying areas and suggested that criminals were pushed out of the centre back to where they came from. It has become clear that the driving force was the reclamation of the downtown to appeal to middle class shoppers and tourists. At the early stages of the Yonge Street Regeneration, Kyle Rae stated the intersection of Yonge and Dundas was disliked by "respectable people." (Ottawa Citizen, 1997, Jan 30th)

This systematic exclusion of certain types of people from the area and the square led Evelyn Ruppert to suggest that the project is an example of organized gentrification of a commercial area that would create a new image of downtown and accommodate the new condominium development. An overwhelmingly economic focus to the creation of Dundas Square has served the interests of the private sector to the detriment of the public. ?

The project is also reminiscent of downtown regeneration projects worldwide. In part due to globalization and changing economics, cities must strive to reinvent themselves to compete in the global marketplace. The regeneration projects are used to recreate the image of the city to market it to potential investors. As mentioned, this image may not reflect the actual conditions of that city. It often leads to superficial spaces, aesthetically similar to those in other cities.

The use of Times Square as a precedent indicates the stakeholders' desire to evoke an image of an international icon and to re-invent Yonge Street in a similar fashion to the re-invention of Broadway and Fifth Avenue. As noted by Zukin, historical and cultural elements are often recreated in a sanitized form and become a superficial reflection of the original (Zukin, 1995). The use of Times Square as a precedent for Dundas Square is significant for two reasons. First, the organizers of the project were not interested in creating a square that reflected Canadian/Torontonian history or Canadian/Torontonian values, but depended on a foreign example, which further alienated the square from the city and its residents. These public spaces are called "ageographic" by Sorkin and fail to create ties to a particular place or culture (Sorkin, 1992). And secondly, it is important to note that Dundas Square and the Yonge Street Regeneration are based on the sanitized version of Times Square that resulted from its recent regeneration. The new Times Square makes reference to the old Times Square and tries to evoke its heyday as a cultural centre, but as Reichl notes in *Reconstructing Times Square* it is simply a "disneyfied" version (Reichl, 1997).

As discussed in the literature review, the entrepreneurial city concept and everything it entails, including a greater role for the private sector, has impacted on the public realm. The various stages of the development of Dundas Square indicate a dependency on an entrepreneurial strategy. From the creation of the public/private partnership that made the regeneration possible to the desire to create a money-making space, a business approach to urban development is clear. On a municipal level this reflects a new approach to development. As Evelyn Ruppert noted the local context in Toronto and the loosening of state control has led to a more fragmented government institution that caters to private interests. Further aggravating this downloading of responsibility was the creation of the Mega-city that according to John Sewell destroyed the ability for council to make good decisions and placed too much power in the hands of certain individuals, referring to councillor Kyle Rae's role in the creation of Dundas Square. The dependency on the private sector to implement planning projects has led to more liberal planning boundaries. Sewell notes that good urban planning, representing the interests of a wide spectrum of the urban population, is dependent on clear rules and restrictions. As

indicated by the OMB hearing, the justification for these interventions often hide underlying motives, such as commercial interests in the guise of social concerns and neighbourhood improvement. This increases polarization in cities as reflected around the world, where the rights of certain people are sacrificed to create sanitized spaces for the “ideal” urban dwellers.

Conclusion:

Dundas Square can be viewed as a symbol of new public space, representative of global changes and reflective of the entrepreneurial strategies permeating cities. The case study revealed that Dundas Square achieved the economic goals of the regeneration project to the detriment of a more socially conscious regeneration that would result in a successful public space for Toronto. The research indicated that the square’s management structure and narrowly defined focus on generating a profitable space led to a sanitized square that excluded certain people who did not fit in with the new image of downtown.

This dissertation is a single case study of a specific public space in Toronto which may restrict its use as a universal example. However, it is representative of changes occurring in public space provision worldwide and offers insight into some of the problems that result from highly controlled public spaces that serve economic rather than social interests. In terms of the methodology, the dependency on qualitative research methods and the inability to perform a full survey need to be acknowledged when assessing the conclusions.

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List of Interviews

Corwin Cambray M.Sc. Pl., RPP

Interviewed on Friday April 15th 2005

Planner, Community Planning, South District,
City of Toronto Planning Department

Gary Wright MCIP, RPP

Interviewed on Tuesday April 19th 2005

Director, Community Planning, South District,
City of Toronto Planning Department,
Project Manager for Dundas Square

Patrick Carnegie

Interviewed on Tuesday April 19th 2005

Manager of Facilities for Dundas Square

Kyle Rae

Interviewed on Monday April 18th 2005

Municipal Councillor for Rosedale-Downtown since 1993
Spearheaded the Yonge Street Regeneration and Dundas Square
Member of Management Board and BIA

Evelyn Ruppert M.Sc. Pl. Ph.D

Interviewed on Friday April 22nd 2005

Professor of Sociology and Urban Studies at York University
Author of *The Moral Economy of Cities* (2005)

John Sewell

Interviewed on Friday July 15th 2005

Alderman for the city of Toronto in the 1970s
Mayor of Toronto 1978-1980
Chaired Commission on Planning and Development Reform in Ontario from 1991-1993
Journalist for Globe and Mail and Now Weekly

Author of *A New City Agenda* (2004), *Redeveloping Public Housing Projects* (1999), *Houses and Homes* (1994), and *The Shape of the City: Toronto Struggles with Modern Planning* (1993)

Colin Berman B. Arch. Sci.

Interviewed on June 26th 2005

Landscape Architect working for Martin Wade Landscape Architects

Barbara Kaplan

Interviewed on Monday July 18th 2005

Member of McGill Granby Resident's Association

Member of Dundas Square Management Board

Secretary of Management Board

Security Guard (name withheld)

Interviewed on Thursday August 4th 2005

Full-time security guard at Dundas Square

Employed by Intelligarde Security Services

Appendix A: Explanation of Observation Framework

In “Public Space” Carr et al, expound a set of criteria for analyzing public space based on and original checklist for evaluating good public spaces by Kevin Lynch.

A successful public space is based on the fulfillment of three things needs, rights, and the development of Meaning. In order to determine whether the people’s rights have been met and whether meaning will/can develop, the basic needs demanded by users need to be fulfilled.

Needs in Public Space

The categories for this include: Comfort, Relaxation, Passive Engagement with the environment, active engagement with the environment, and Discovery.

Comfort relates to access to sun/shade, shelter, seating and an overall sense of security.

Relaxation relates to the spaces ability or inability to allow for a calmness/relaxation. This may include whether one feels sufficiently separated from traffic/urban environment or has access to calming features such as water.

Passive engagement with the environment refers to the ability to use the space in a passive way such as people watching or watching live music.

In contrast **active engagement** with the environment relates to the ability for people to become involved with activities occurring in the space such as a ceremony or protest.

And lastly, **discovery** is described as “the ability for a space to stimulate and delight”. Essentially this means whether exploration is possible and if, in a physical sense, the space is inspiring. If these five needs are fulfilled then a space passes the first set of criteria and will probably be used in some capacity.

Rights in Public Space

The second requirement of public space is the ability for people to use the space in ways that fulfill their desires. This relates closely with the first requirement because spaces must satisfy needs in order to satisfy rights(Carr et al., 1992, p.137). It is also evident that different spaces will allow different levels of freedom. Also, it is important to consider that a space that provides freedom to one group may restrict it for another.

On the most basic level having **access** to the space is necessary. Access is defined in three ways; physical, visual, and symbolic. Physical access relates to whether the space is open and accessible to the public; without gates and other barriers. Secondly, the creation of visual barriers can prevent the use of a space. Questions that need to be addressed are: Can users see into the space?, Do they know that it is public? Do they feel

welcome and safe ? (Carr et al. 1992, p.139). And finally, symbolic access refers to the use of cues that might restrict the use of the space by some groups. A cue can indicate what type of space it is and who is welcome there.

If access is granted, then **Freedom of Action**, or the users' right to use a space in a certain way needs to be considered. This can relate to the physical design of the space. If a space is overly restrictive due to design features then other uses may be restricted. This is referred to as "specificity of spaces" (Carr et al, 1992, p.144).

The third condition, the ability for users to **Claim** the space relates to freedom of action, but is discussed in a more personal context. For example, is the user able to seek solitude and anonymity? Also can a space be seen to add to personal growth/personal use without restricting use by others. This can also be related to how a space is managed.

Carr suggests that a good space will be able to **change**. If a space is manipulatable it is better able to suit needs of many users and to change with the times (Carr, 1992)

The final category in this section is "**Ownership and Disposition**" which relates to how a space is managed and controlled. If a space is overly controlled then the public nature of the space will be sacrificed.

Meaning in Public Space

Development of meaning is dependent on the ability of a space to fulfill needs, which as discussed also relates to rights. The final stage in the development of good public space is the development of meaning.

The first issue to be addressed is **legibility** which refers to the users' ability to determine what kind of space it is and what it is used for. This is often communicated through cues and is important in determining whether users feel welcome.

Secondly, one considers whether the space **resonates with one's life**. This refers to whether a space allows bonds to be created and occurs through continued use/association with the site.

Similarly, determining whether the space has **relevance to one's life** is reflected in the connection to a personal context. For example the city or country in which the space is located.

Comfort as a basic need is necessary in order to create a useable space in which meaning can develop.

Place Identity and Rootedness often develop over time and relates to the identify development of memories , feelings and conceptions.

Group Connections can refer to a single group overtaking a space in order to fulfill their cultural needs. This is referred to as “cultural appropriation” and creates a link with the space and a particular culture. A group connection to a space can also form through community involvement in the design that creates a deeper bond with a place.

If a space provided **connections to a larger society**, it usually refers to religious, cultural, or civic connections in the form of buildings or monuments that have specific significance. In this case the space can serve to reinforce a connection on a national and/or local level.

The development of meaning also relates to the **Symbolic values** associated with a space. These symbols indicate what site stands for represents and as Carr notes can be both positive and negative.

Psychological connection evolves through the use of archetypes to create a deeper bond. For example, reference to a European Square will evoke the meaning and feelings associated with that foreign space.

Biological connections refer to the physiological connections to a space and usually occur through the use of greenery. The body relates to the changing life cycles of the seasons as witnessed through nature.

And finally meaning can develop in a site due to **connections to other worlds**, such as the fantasy atmosphere of amusement parks.

The following is an example of the Evaluation Framework used during the site analysis.

Evaluation of Dundas Square

| Needs in Public Space | |
|---|--|
| Comfort - access to shade/sun) -shelter from snow/rain -seating (variety of types /configurations) -security (relates to design and management) -is space overly restrictive or loosely controlled leaving space/people vulnerable - does it have threatening spaces/users | |
| Relaxation (does space allow for rest/contemplation) - separation from traffic/urban congestion -access to greenery -water features (enhance calmness) | |
| Passive Engagement with environment -space for people watching -musicians, movies, public art does space allow one to participate passively in urban life | |
| Active Engagement with environment- Does space present the opportunity to engage with strangers - passive & active (protests, events or -socializing with friends/family) | |
| Discovery -does space fulfill human desire for stimulation and delight -is exploration made possible or is space overly restrictive (due to design and management) | |

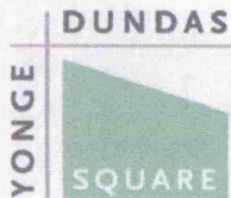
| Rights in Public Space | Observations/Comments |
|---|-----------------------|
| <p>Access:</p> <p><u>Physical</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -is space is available to the public/without barriers -is it connected to paths of circulation to draw people into the space <p><u>Visual</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - can users see into the space -is it obvious that the space is public -do users feel welcome and safe <p><u>Symbolic</u> - relates to the presence of cues that indicate who is and is not welcome in the space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -cues can be people (eg. Businessmen, drug dealers, teenagers) -security guards can function as a symbolic barrier -also social symbolic access- surrounding facilities or design elements (eg. type of stores surrounding space is a clue as to who the space is for) | |
| <p>Freedom of Action: the right to use a space as one desires (to fulfill needs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -needs to be a balance between groups' differing needs (is this achieved) -also relates to regulations - is space overly restrictive? - for whom? <p>The physical layout may prevent uses - if design is too specific (what are intended uses vs what people want to do in a space) "specificity of spaces"</p> | |
| <p>Claim</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -ability to claim space in order to fulfill needs -privacy is often sought in public space <p>privacy = solitude and anonymity</p> <p>Is this possible?</p> <p>another need = intimacy</p> <p>Is intimate communication with others possible/fostered?</p> | |

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>propriety - does one group claim space over another/exclude others due to behaviour/intimidation (closely related to how space is managed)</p> | |
| <p>Change a good space will be able to change-either to overcome a problem or to adjust with the times how manipulatable is the site?</p> <p>Is it overdesigned? (Eg. uses are very specific)</p> | |
| <p>Ownership and Disposition: Relates to management of space who/what is it for? (What is the underlying purpose/goal?)</p> | |

| Meaning in Public Space | Observations |
|--|--------------|
| <p>Legibility (necessary to develop meaning)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -relates to the existence of recognizable cues that are understood by users -the cues communicate what kind of place it is and whether users are welcome (Does space feel public - why/why not?) | |
| <p>Resonate w/ Lives</p> <p>Space must evoke patterns of use that create bonds with space (recurring events such as New Years Celebrations)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -is the space conducive to the sharing of collective goals? -does space enrich lives? | |
| <p>Relevance w/ lives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is space useable? (for whom) - does it connect with personal context? - (eg.Toronto, Canada, 2005) | |
| <p>Comfort</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Are rights and needs fulfilled? - is space sufficiently “public”? | |
| <p>Place Identity and Rootedness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -the identity of a space will help people to make connections to it through memories, interpretations, feelings, conceptions -the identity of the space must be clear - is this the case? | |
| <p>Group Connections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -can occur through cultural appropriation (space dominated by one culture) - connections are formed between people based on cultural elements of space (is there a cultural element (Canadian or other) that unites people in square?) - also occurs through community | |

| | |
|--|--|
| involvement in design | |
| Connections to a larger society -religious/ cultural/civic (includes the existence of monuments/places of political significance) -does space reinforce ties at a national and local level? | |
| Symbolic Values -symbols increase meaning in a site -can be positive and negative -What are the symbols? Who relates to symbols? | |
| Psychological Use of Archetypes to create psychological bond: eg. European Square (can bonds be transplanted/evoke?) Biological Physiological: physical connection to surroundings - usually occurs through use of greenery (body relates to life cycles of the changing seasons) | |
| Connections to Other Worlds -space creates a connection to fantasy world (eg. amusement parks) - eg. world of advertising and all this evokes (promises) | |

Appendix B: Dundas Square Fee Structure



2005 EVENT PERMIT FEES

| | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|----------|
| May 16 – October 10 December 1 – January 1 | 7:00am – 7:00am <i>full day</i> | \$2250 |
| February 28 – May 15 October 11 – November 30 | 7:00 am – 7:00 am <i>full day</i> | \$1485 |
| January 2 – February 27 | 7:00 am – 7:00 am <i>full day</i> | \$742.50 |

Premium permit dates:

Victoria Day; Canada Day; Labour Day; New Year's Eve. Contact us for details.

SPECIAL DISCOUNTS on above fees:

| | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Registered Charities: | 25% |
| Non-Profit Organizations: | 15% |
| Multi-Date Booking: | 10% <i>three + confirmed bookings</i> |

Permit fee: includes area marked in schedule "C" including stage and greenroom

Commercial film/photo shoots:

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Commercial photo shoot | \$93.75/hour <i>one hour minimum</i> |
| Commercial film shoot | \$93.75/hour <i>three hours minimum</i> |

Promotional Sampling space: \$250 / day 10'x10'

Event Support fees for items such as electrical, audio-visual, security, maintenance and equipment rental may apply depending on the nature of the event. The event organizer will receive an estimate of these costs based on event requirements before their booking is confirmed.

Community and City-sponsored events:

When permit fees are waived, event organizers will be required to pay a minimum Event Support Flat Fee of \$500 (4-hour minimum) and \$125 for each additional hour.

Taxes extra. Rates subject to change.



2005 Event Support Fees

| | |
|---|---|
| Onsite Coordinator Supervise load-in / out. Liaison with event organizer and site services. min 4 hour call | \$26.25 / hr |
| Electrician Required to do tie-in / disconnect from site power. Min 3 hour call. Weekends: Fri. 5:00pm – Mon. 7:00 am | weekdays \$80.39 weekends \$138.40 |
| Audio Visual Technician Required to operate Yonge-Dundas Square A / V equipment. min. 4 hour call | \$37.50 / hr |
| Operations Crew Set-up/ maintenance/ strike of site equipment. Site cleaning. Garbage removal. min. 4 hour call | \$18.85 / hr |
| Security Monitor site safety & by-law enforcement. Crowd management. min. 4 hour call | \$18.65 / hr |
| Garbage Removal | \$3 / bag |
| Spot washing Required after major events. In some case, a more extensive power washing may be required at additional cost. | \$250 flat |
| Snow Removal Please ask for quote. | |

Community and City-sponsored events:

When permit fees are waived, event organizers will be required to pay a minimum Event Support Flat Fee of \$500 (4-hour minimum) and \$125 for each additional hour.



Equipment List and Fees 2005 schedule 'B'

| | | | |
|--|---------------|----------|---|
| TENTS | | | \$100 / day including set-up with 1 x 6' table, 2 x chairs |
| 18 10' x 10' pop-up tents (white) | | | |
| BARRICADES | | | \$5 / day |
| 25 7' long pedestrian barricades | | | |
| FURNITURE | | | |
| 15 x 6' tables | | | \$10 / day |
| 5 x red table skirts with clips | | | \$5 / day |
| 40 x black armless chairs | | | \$3 / day |
| 20 x silver café tables | | | \$3 / day |
| 50 x silver café chairs | | | \$5 / day |
| 1 x t-stand sign holder (28"h x 22"w) | | | \$10 / day |
| ELECTRICAL | | | |
| 3 x 400 amp service under stage (requires electrician) | | | Power consumption 12.5 cents/KWH |
| 1 x 200 amp service under stage (requires electrician) | | | |
| 11 x 15 amp outlets (one at each pillar) | | | 15 amp Power Drop \$100 |
| 20 x 15 amp outlets at centre lightmast | | | (incl. consumption) |
| 10 x 3' long cable mats \$ 10 / day | | | |
| WATER | | | use as required |
| Hose bib under stage. | | | |
| Hose bib in janitor's closet on P1 level. | | | |
| Hose bib under small canopy | | | |
| 200' medium duty garden hose available | | | |
| AUDIO EQUIPMENT | | | sound system \$400 / day Technician \$37.50 / hr |
| 2 | Electro Voice | SX 300E | Full Range Speakers |
| 1 | Yamaha | EMX88s | 8 Ch Powered Mixer |
| 2 | K&M | 214-6 | Speaker Stands |
| 2 | WNSS | 25lb | sandbags |
| 1 | Teac | AD600 | 3 disc CD + Cass. Deck w rack kit |
| 4 | Shure | SM 58 | Microphones |
| 4 | K&M | 210/8-B | Tripod Mic stands with boom |
| 2 | Digiflex | 50' | Speakon cables |
| 10 | Digiflex | 25' | mic cables |
| 2 | Digiflex | 25' 1/4" | mono line cables |
| 4 | Digiflex | 6' | RCA to 1/4" cables |
| 1 | ECM | NA | roadcase w wheels |
| OTHER | | | |
| 6' A-frame ladder, 16' extension ladder | | | use as required |
| flatbed dolly, 2-wheel dolly | | | |
| 30 x 50lb. concrete blocks | | | |

Prices do not include GST. Prices subject to change

2/3/2005